They knew that Deane had shot himself. They knew about his "little" gun, a Luger given to him by his father-in-law. They assumed that he had shot himself in the head, and that it would therefore be a closed casket. An obsequious flunky escorted them into a darkened room where they were playing some sort of mellow-jazzy elevator music and there were a lot of women, his in-laws, hovering about in sequined evening gowns.

It was grotesque, but the only thing he really noticed, in a beam of light at the end of the room, was Deane's face. It was an open casket after all.

Serge walked a few paces towards it, then recoiled. He'd seen enough. He was ready to go. Johnny walked right up to the casket. There was a faint white disk in the middle of Deane's brow. It must have been the bullet hole. The back of his head had been blown off.

Johnny had never seen him asleep, but his eyelids looked unnaturally flat and sunken. His eyes had probably been blown out too. His lips were bloodless, thin and tight as if he were still experiencing pain.

*****

Deane said he'd always wanted to be an actor. He was a good one. Johnny really didn't know him very well.

*****

He was hard.

*****

A rat-like scurrying along the dusky boulevard.... A woman who resembled an especially untidy bag-lady only a bit too young.... A man with a foppish hair-cut under an enormous sombrero.... They could only be.... Drs. Trixie and Praetorius....

It was

Garbage Night.

Every now and then one of the noisome pair farted joyously at the sudden discovery of an especially appetizing piece of S.H.I.T....

A linoleum-topped tavern-table with an hilariously ugly matching base.... An old radio with the guts spilling out just like one of their patients.... It was D.E.A.D. too.... A heavy iron typewriter serviced by the Unification Typewriter Co. of Beijing.... The keys rusted together into a massive metal fist....

A palsied limb emerged from the offal like Excalibur's arm and started brazenly groping for the same trash.... Praetorius shrieked excitedly as Trixie flailed wildly at the shadows....

Again and again. And again....

Ugh, Ug-g-g-h-h-h said the shadows....

The dirty duo loaded their heaving van with coveted S.H.I.T.... They were secretly